SELECTIONS

FROM THE

VERNACULAR NEWSPAPERS

PUBLISHED IN THE PANJAB,

NORTH-WESTERN PROVINCES,

OUDH, AND CENTRAL PROVINCES,

Received up to 31st December, 1874.

POLITICAL (DOMESTIC).

The Taj-ul-Akhbar of the 8th December publishes the letter of a correspondent who complains of the present arrange ment and organization of Municipal Committees. The writer refers chiefly to those in Oudh. He says that these institutions are understood to have been established for the benefit of the public, but that he fails to see in what the benefit consists; and thinks that some other name than "benefit" ought to be substituted! that the "oppression and violence" practised by the Committees are anything but beneficial to the public. Then, again, he points out that the results of the working are not satisfactory, that no good roads, &c., are constructed; in fact that no good at all results from them. Again, the Committee, he says, is composed of members who, although they are considered wealthy and respectable, are mere puppets, and sit in council like deaf and dumb people, staring at the chairs and tables; "yes" or "no" being the extent of their argument for or against any measure of importance. The writer goes on to say-"Now tell me is this what is called a Committee? Is this what we have to lean on for reform? When the members are asked, we generally receive this reply-'Who asks me? They generally among themselves

talk 'git pit' (an insolent term for English), and if they question me, I can but acquiesce in what they say. Many things mentioned I do not even comprehend, but to do our duty we obey as members.'" The writer urges the following suggestions:—

- (1.) To remove from Municipal Committees all cloth-merchants, Banias, and such like: only allowing respectable and experienced men of ability to remain.
- (2.) That each one be solicited to give a separate opinion of his own, the majority to argue the point and put it to the vote.
- (3.) To remove the compulsory order concerning the construction of the roofs of native buildings with tiles in the district. "No doubt it is a princely order, for how is it possible for the subjects of such an exalted Government to live in a grass hut? but, unfortunately, not 95 out of 100 can afford to pay for such luxuries."
- (4.) "The time has now arrived when great and small bewail their hard fate and the hard times that have fallen on them, and the agriculturists are loud in this general complaint. Even the merchants sob out their grievances in despair, and it is high time that you should extend to all the same help that you did in the days of the income-tax, and see that, through the columns of your paper, some prayer for redress may be prominently brought forward."

In the local news columns the following appears:—"We hear that a person who was well known by the name of Sah has been killed at the Pata Nala, Lucknow." The police are investigating the matter.

The Atalik-i-Hind of the 21st December publishes the letter of a correspondent complaining of the present management of jails, and gives it as his opinion that until a complete reform is effected in this department, the vices which he enumerates will continue. The writer declares that jails in

Hindustan are mere schools for vice; and that it is absurd to expect that morals can be improved by time, or any amount of supervision, in these prisons; "for when some sixty or seventy persons of bad character are collected together in one place, they will naturally combine and concoct such things as even Satan himself would fly from. In the first place there is no ease or rest. Convicts are locked up in one compartment in lots of sixty or seventy each, which of itself, while encouraging crime and vice, is decidedly against all chances of preserving health. Again, the men composing the amla are generally very indifferent characters in jails, and no moral lessons are taught to prisoners whatever.

"Again, there is a system of gross neglect of the condition of youthful prisoners and instructing them in the arts and sciences."

"Now," adds the writer, "we will discuss the last point. The same difficulties which twenty-five years ago existed in English jails will soon show themselves here—in fact they seem to be already showing themselves. Even then our jails were not in such a state of disorganization as they are now in Hindustan, and the keeping of prisoners in separate cells is not all that is requisite, as solitary confinement does not always tend to improve the morals."

The writer concludes by alluding to the remarks of the Secretary of State on the management of Indian jails, which is said to have been the means of lessening crime; and urging upon the authorities the necessity of separating prisoners in Indian jails as much as can possibly be effected.

The Patiala Akhbar of the same date publishes the letter of a correspondent who seems to think that the Government intend taxing the people in some way for the expenses of the Road Fund; or at least in some way rendering them responsible as they were in the time of the famine. The editor explains that this is altogether a mistaken notion, but at the same time he thinks that the resolution which has led to this

erroneous impression had better have been kept back for two or three years.

The Matla-i-Nur of the 22nd December, under the heading "Pilibhit," reports that a lady, while travelling from Bareilly to Pilibhit, was attacked by a gang of robbers, who carried off property valued at Rs. 1,300. She fired on the party and returned to Bareilly. This lady declares that she is quite certain that one of the gang received the bullet she fired; yet, although the police are on the look out, there is no clue to them."

The Vidya Vilas of the 7th December remarks upon the common custom of sarishtadars conversing in English with their European official superiors. The writer says that although the conversation may not bear the slightest reference to any case under trial, or about to be tried, still it gives the parties concerned an idea that their interests are interfered with, and that, consequently, there is a very uneasy feeling created on the subject. The writer admits that no sarishtadar has the power to interfere with any hakim in the administration of justice, but he thinks that it would be well if the Government would pass an order prohibiting judicial officers from holding conversation in English with their subordinates, as it would tend to dispel an idea which has very generally impressed the minds of the people; and he thinks it but right that such a custom should be prohibited.

The Urdu Akhbar of the 24th December mentions the prevalence of theft in the Bulandshahr District. It is said that property is quite unsafe, and that people cannot sleep peacefully for fear of being robbed at night. The police are reported to be on the alert, but no clue to the thieves is ever found. "In Mauza Salimpur, under the police chauki of Siyana, a theft has just been committed and property stolen to the value of Rs. 50,000. The hakims of the Courts are most strict, and imperative orders have been passed to the police to institute a searching inquiry, or it will not be well

for them." The editor adds—"When the preservers of the peace themselves are breakers of it and thieves, what can be expected? God alone can protect us."

The Oudh Akhbar of the 25th December, under the heading "Darjeeling," mentions that the tea-planters complain much of the want of consideration shown them by the Government, and they are very anxious that a railway should be established up to Jalpaiguri for their benefit.

The Nur-ul-Anwar of the 26th December mentions that at Bhongaon, in the Mainpuri District, at the tahsil, or near it, some person cut the throat of a child for the sake of its ornaments valued at some four rupees. An investigation is being instituted, and the editor remarks that this is the evil result of decorating children with ornaments.

The Saiyid-ul-Akhbar of the 20th December mourns over the custom of taking bribes which, the writer says, is still much indulged in. He goes on to say that only a few days ago the Deputy Inspector of Police (Mir Hidayat Ali) at Lakhimpur was imprisoned for six months for this offence. and now this very man has been again arrested for the same offence, but under exaggerated circumstances, as he exercised great oppression when extorting the bribe. The result is that he has been imprisoned for two years with hard labor and a fine of Rs. 100; while a moharrir has also been imprisoned for two years. The editor is of opinion that this punishment is richly deserved, and thinks that if Government would employ spies, or a secret department, as informers, and obtain correct information concerning those who are in the habit of accepting bribes, it would be well; and he is further of opinion that if such a department were established many officers would have their real characters exposed who are now unsuspected. The writer concludes by stating that although news-writers can generally give an idea of what goes on, they are always in dread of incurring the displeasure of officials when they do so.

The Wakil-i-Hindustan of the 23rd December complains at great length, editorially, of the police administration generally in Hindustan. The writer, encouraged by the liberty allowed to the Press of pointing out grievances, and after apologising for bringing the subject forward for the information of "our just and considerate Government," endeavours to enumerate the numerous faults and failings existing in the present police system, with the view to have them remedied, if possible, though he at the same time admits that it is difficult to discover a proper remedy. Assuming, however, that the object of establishing the police force was the protection of life and property, and considering that thefts and dacoities continue, the writer looks upon the measure as a failure. But in the first place, he seems to think that the people composing the police force are often in a great measure to blame for the crime that is still complained of. He extracts from a paper named the Aftab-i-Panjab, dated the 2nd April, 1874, a paragraph showing how that on the border of Aligarh an Inspector of Police was sent for the security of the public: and that the first act this man committed was to forcibly outrage a young girl, the result being that the case was sent up to the Sessions for trial. Again, he instances, that when the recent disturbances between the Parsees and Muhammadans took place at Bombay, although it originated on religious grounds, it was in the first instance brought about by the misbehaviour of a police constable. And, he adds, it is a well-known fact that these constables are always in combination with chankidars and thieves. He proceeds: "We could give twenty instances of this being the case, but it would be needless to do so, as the fame of the police in this respect is spread far and wide, and, besides, we have not space or leisure to dwell on the subject. Lucky are those whose property when stolen can even reckon upon a restoration of a portion of it. But where are they? Echo answers-'Where."

The usual mode of transacting business in the police is as follows:—Whenever the report of a theft or burglary is made

at the Thana, the Sahib Deputy Inspector condescends to proceed to the spot, seats himself on a bed, and an investigation; is commenced. First of all the blame is cast on those who have lost their property; "for," argues the Inspector Sahib, "how can the hands of a stranger come here? Those of the household are the thieves!" No remonstrances, however reasonable, will avail. The cock stands on his own dunghill, and with a volley of abuse, beatings, and threats of imprisonment, the most frequent result is to make some sort of offering of what remains to the police, and congratulate one's self upon having escaped further molestation! The star of the police is still very bright and great; people are by no means free from the tax by which they can ensure themselves from some sort of trouble or other: and lastly, the Inspector prevails on the sufferers to give in a razinama, which is only too gladly done to escape further trouble and expense.

"And now another phase of the case appears. The report of the Inspector Sahib to the hakim is to the effect that the plaintiff's case is a false one, and therefore the whole thing is dismissed."

The writer goes on to say that in the same way the whole working of the police is a kind of fraud. "But," says the writer, "we will turn to another class of men called zaildars, who are employed throughout the Panjab, and kept up by means of a tax levied upon the rayaya. Now these men do not collect even the Government revenue from the zemindars, nor do they afford the least assistance in disputes which often occur between zemindars; but their business consists in constantly interfering and forcibly siezing fowls, eggs, &c., for themselves, under the pretence that they are for the Settlement Now we should like to know whether these men are kept up for this work. But admitting that it is so, and that the people are taxed to pay for them, let not this kind of thing continue after the settlement work is over! Do not let the zemindars be so cruelly taxed for a whole year! Now, if the Government is aware of all that is going on, how comes it Covernment is not aware of it, why does it not make itself acquainted with it, and ease our burden, if such be really its desire. If the control of the police is to be transferred to the Civil Department, what difference would it make? We feel certain that the people generally would be more content if it were so."

The same paper says:—"There is said to be much dissatisfaction shown at Batala (Gurdaspur) concerning the chungi tax. The people complain that they have not seen any rules by which it falls so heavy upon them. At the fair held at Pechel, about three kos from Batala, sugarcane was taxed at nearly Rs. 50, which the traders had never before paid; while melonsellers had to pay in proportion, viz., Rs. 50, and others in the same way. The tax was paid very reluctantly, and only through fear of the sarkar. Now we have hope that some consideration will be shown us by Government.

The Safir-i-Hind of the 25th December states that a padri named Manson Sahib, in the famine districts, induced some six hundred people to become converts to Christianity by tempting them with offers of grain.

The Koh-i-Nur of the 26th December draws attention to a letter in which the government of India under native rule and the same under existing arrangements is placed in contrast. It is said that the present government of the country under British rule is all that could be desired, inasmuch as that persons of all castes and creeds are perfectly contented, and are not molested in any way, nor are their religious prejudices or principles in any way interfered with. The writer proceeds to say—"All are free to act for themselves; the laws of the country have attained that amount of perfection that even religious disputes are settled satisfactorily, and one and all are loud in praise of the present administration." The editor adds—"No doubt that this praise is well merited, and we cannot find words to express our thankfulness for the benefits we receive."

The Maksud-ul-Akhbar of the third week of December records a case of murder at Khurja. It appears that some one stole some property from the shop of one Ram Chandra, and as soon as the latter heard of it he assembled some people and maltreated one of his servants so unmercifully that he died. When he discovered the result of his violence, he at once absconded with his family and has not yet been found.

The Rajputana Social Science Congress Gazette of the 25th December mentions that an ambitious woman at Bombay expressed a desire to have an interview with Mr. Grant Duff, but did not succeed in her wishes. Her object is said to have been to forward a petition to Her Majesty the Queen for the prohibition of early marriages. "Elphinstone's History of Jalal-ud-din Muhammad Akbar shows that that monarch was against early marriages, and this sensible woman argues that in the rule of such a wise Government the same custom should be observed."

The Akhbar-i-Anjuman-i-Panjab of the same date points out the necessity of establishing a post-office at the town of Jalalpur (about fifteen miles from the Tahsil of Hafizabad, to the west). This town is described as respectable, with substantial buildings, containing about 1,000 Hindu inhabitants and 400 Muhammadans, with 200 shops, and is well worthy of the notice of Government. It is added that there is no post-office within thirteen miles of this town, and this causes considerable inconvenience to those who reside at Jalalpur, the mode of sending letters being thus: when a good collection of letters is made, the post-office munshi at Pindi Bhatzan sends them by a bearer, but this is only twice a month. The writer thinks that if the Government cannot afford an improvement upon this system, the chungi ought to pay the expenses of it.

The Panjabi Akhbar of the 26th December draws attention to the persons known in the Panjab, and especially at Lahore, as mahalladars, whom the writer admits may in former

times have been useful men in their way, but who in these enlightened days are utterly useless, and only serve to increase the daily expenses of the people. These men, he says, were formerly held in considerable veneration and respect, and were selected from the better classes of the native community. They were consulted upon marriages and divorce cases, disinheritances, the disposal of property, mortgages, &c., &c. The appointment was not one in perpetuity, but it gradually became so, as that of "kazi" and "mufti." The writer points out, at length, the uselessness of the appointment now, and thinks it would be well if the Government ordered it to be abolished, as every thing is now decided by the English Courts of law, and there is no longer any need for an appeal to the 'mahalladars;' in fact there is "nothing for them to do but to show themselves in Court, give evidence when necessary, and receive their fees, which they take care to do. But when the hakims have no desire to be helped by such men, why should the rayaya pay such regard to them? And as the office of 'kazis' and 'sakkas' has been abolished, so let us hope that this one will soon be."

The Roznamcha of the 26th December complains of the counduct of the audience at some new Theatre erected near the Masjid of Tippoo Sultan, Calcutta. The performance itself is designated as having been not worth seeing, and the Europeans are said to have thrown their hats about, laughing immoderately, and conducting themselves in a most uproarious manner. The writer concludes thus:—"Hindustanis are already made to appear an uncivilized set, but the conduct of this highly civilized nation was such as to create disgust in their minds, while many of the more respectable English and native gentlemen were quite displeased at what took place. Many left the house regretting that they had spent their money so uselessly."

This paper recomends that as the Government has expended twenty-five lakes of rupees on the Hooghly bridge, it should do a little more and erect a Sarai also.

The Shola-i-Tur of the 29th December, on the authority of a correspondent at Jamalpur writing to the Indian Mirror, states that infanticide has become of daily occurrence there, and that the police take no notice of the crime, which was scarcely known there in former days.

POLITICAL (FOREIGN).

The Rohilkhand Akhbar of the 19th December, referring to the pension granted to the Maharaja Appa Sahib of Satara by Lord Northbrook, praises the Viceroy for this act of generosity; but regrets that permission was not at the same time granted for the Maharaja to dwell in his ancestral home. The writer considers it a piece of useless extravagance to erect a new building for him when the Mahal Sarai, which belongs to the Maharaja, is still standing and is of so little use to Government.

The Nur Afshan of the 24th December, in its summary of news, reports that the Maharaja of Mysore is about to raise a regiment composed of Eurasian troops.

The Oudh Akhbar of the 25th December is of opinion that the condition of Burmah is in a deplorable state of misrule; and intimates that if the Government does not soon do something to avert the evil consequences which threaten it, some calamity such as has befallen Afghanistan will happen. The writer founds his surmises upon the fact of the King having three sons, each one of whom aspires to the throne; and he adds that the eldest is quite opposed to the British Government, while the other two are friendly disposed to it.

The Panjabi Akhbar of the 26th December brings to notice, in an editorial, the disgraceful way in which the mails are carried to and from Gwalior. The writer says that the sawars supplied by the Maharaja of Gwalior are disgracefully mounted, that the horses can scarcely walk, that the troopers themselves cannot ride, and that the swords they carry are of little or no use as weapons of protection. "In fact the whole thing

is a farce, and no aid at all to the security of the mails they are supposed to guard; it is owing to this state of things that the mails have been so often plundered." The editor expresses his surprise that the Maharaja, with all his troops, is unable to make better arrangements, especially when he knows so well that he is in a measure responsible for the security of the mails. He concludes as follows:—"Now, if we were to say plainly that the Maharaja is a party to all this plunder of travellers and the Government mails, our words would not be out of place. And we hope that the Government will warn the Maharaja to be more careful of the lives and property of the public than he now is."

COMMERCIAL.

(Railway).

The Urdu Delhi Gazette of the 26th December publishes the letter of a correspondent at Umballa complaining that at several stations on the Panjab Railway line, boxes, courier-bags, and other valuable property have been taken from the railway carriages by some person or persons in the disguise of ticket-collectors, who enter at night with lanterns, and, if the passengers happen to be asleep, carry off all they can lay their hands on. Should the travellers be awake they are asked to show their tickets, and thus all suspicion is removed.

The following Vernacular newspapers have been examined in this report:-

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ALLAHABAD:
The 2nd January, 1875.

GEORGE WAGENTREIBER, Goot, Reporter on the Vernacular Press of Upper Inches